

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DPW-01 EA-11 AF-10 EUR-25 AID-20

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R 190541Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9849
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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DEPT PASS AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, BG

SUBJECT: BHUTTO ON RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAHORE, FEB 16, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ANNOUNCED THAT GOP WOULD RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH AS SOON AS BDG ABANDONED NOTION OF TRYING 195 POWS. HE SAID IN VIEW OF LACK OF TIME BEFORE OPENING OF ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE AT LAHORE, WHICH PAKISTAN WANTED BANGLADESH TO ATTEND, HE WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH "CAST-IRON GUARANTEE" THAT POWS WOULD NOT BE TRIED, AND INDICATED HE WOULD NOT INSIST UPON THEIR RETURN BEFORE SUMMIT. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO WARN BANGLADESH THAT, IF BDG AGREED TO HIS PROPOSAL AND THEREAFTER RESILED FROM COMMITMENT, CHINA WOULD HELP GOP RETALIATE BY WITHHOLDING RECOGNITION ITSELF AND BY VETOING ANY PROPOSAL TO ADMIT BANGLADESH TO UNITED NATIONS.

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2. IN EXPLAINING HIS POSITION, BHUTTO TWICE REMARKED

THAT THERE WAS "GROWING SENTIMENT" FROM SEVERAL OTHER NATIONS ATTENDING SUMMIT THAT BANGLADESH BE INVITED. IN THAT REGARD, HE SPECIFICALLY NAMED EGYPT, ALGERIA, AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND ADDED THAT IRAN, LIBYA AND TURKEY MIGHT ALSO "BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED." HE SAID HE HAD INFORMED CHINA, SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES ABOUT SITUATION.

3. BHUTTO WENT OVER HIS USUAL ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT BANGLADESH SUMMIT ATTENDANCE AND REVIEWED GOP POSITION RE BDG TRIALS OF 195. HE INDICATED CONCERN ABOUT RECENT TRIP OF GOI FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH TO DACCA WHEN HE NOTED THAT FONMIN HAD STATED THAT QUESTION OF BANGLADESH PARTICIPATION IN ISLAMIC SUMMIT "DID NOT ARISE" UNLESS BDG WERE RECOGNIZED BY PAKISTAN. HE WONDERED IF SINGH'S REMARKS SHOWED THAT INDIA WAS OPPOSED TO BANGLADESH PARTICIPATION IN SUMMIT, ARGUING THAT IF GOI WANTED PAKISTAN TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH, IT WOULD ENCOURAGE MUJIB TO ATTEND SUMMIT. ACCORDING TO PRIME MINISTER, IF BANGLADESH ATTENDED CONFERENCE IT WOULD BE "MORALLY RECOGNIZED" BY PAKISTAN BECAUSE IT WOULD RECEIVE EQUAL TREATMENT WITH OTHER SOVEREIGN STATES ATTENDING CONFERENCE, INCLUDING FULL HONORS FOR MUJIB UPON ARRIVAL. "THAT WOULD HAVE AMOUNTED TO COMING TO THE VERGE OF RECOGNITION," SAID BHUTTO.

4. NONETHELESS, BHUTTO REMARKED, HE WAS HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THERE WERE "INDICATIONS" THAT BANGLADESH MIGHT DROP NOTION OF TRYING 195 POWS. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT ACT TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH UNLESS GUARANTEES WERE MADE, BECAUSE HE HAD ALREADY HAD "SAD EXPERIENCES" IN DEALING WITH SHEIKH MUJIB IN PAST. HE SAID SHEIKH HAD TWICE, ON DECEMBER 27, 1971 AND AGAIN ON JANUARY 7, 1972, MADE "CERTAIN SOLEMN COMMITMENTS WHICH HE HAD NOT FULFILLED." BHUTTO ENDED HIS REMARKS ON BANGLADESH BY SAYING, "ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY."

5. COMMENT: THERE IS WIDE EXPECTATION IN LAHORE THAT DEAL HAS BEEN STRUCK BETWEEN GOP AND BDG AND THAT SHEIKH MUJIB WILL, AFTER ALL, ATTEND ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE. MANY OBSERVERS POINT TO CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE INCLUDING UNFILLED SEAT AT CONFERENCE SITE, UNUTILIZED FLAG POLE AT EVERY FLAG STAND IN CITY, AND STANDBY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR UNNAMED PARTICIPANT; ALL AVAILABLE FOR INSTANT USE SHOULD BANGLADESH REPRESENTATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COME TO LAHORE. OBSERVERS NOTE THAT BHUTTO HAD MORE THAN ONCE REFERRED TO PRESSURE FROM OTHER ISLAMIC NATIONS AND EXPECT HIM TO USE THAT TO EXPLAIN DECISION TO PAKISTANIS. HOWEVER, ALMOST NO ONE EXPECTS GOP TO ACCORD RECOGNITION IF BDG DOES NOT GIVE ASSURANCES IT WILL NOT TRY 195 POWS. UDF LEADER PIR OF PAGARO TOLD PRESS FEBRUARY 17 HIS PARTY (PML) OPPOSED RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH, BUT FEW OBSERVERS EXPECT OUTBREAK OF POPULAR RESENTMENT IF GOP DOES RECOGNIZE BDG IN CONJUNCTION

WITH SUMMIT.
KING

NOTE BY OC/T: LAHORE 248 NOT PASSED.

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